DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 331 224 EC 300 205

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TITLE Annual Assessment of School SLP's by Principals/Special Education Directors.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (Seattle, WA, November 16-19, 1990).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; *Language Handicaps; *Speech Handicaps; Speech Pathology; *Speech Therapy; State Standards; Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Improvement; *Therapists
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia

ABSTRACT

The monograph presents the guidelines of the Georgia Department of Education for annual evaluation of school speech-language pathologists (SLP). A combination of assessment methods is recommended including observation and review of records. The philosophy and purposes of the SLP evaluation is briefly outlined and includes identification and reinforcement of effective SLP practices and identification of SLPs who do not meet the minimum standards. Two evaluation instruments--the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Instrument and the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Duties and Responsibilities Instrument--are identified. The importance of training evaluators is stressed and a recommended timeline for annual assessment provided. The steps of the evaluation process are explained and diagrammed in flow chart format. They are: (1) orientation; (2) pre-evaluation conference; (3) specific procedures in implementing assessment measures; (4) scoring and written comments; (5) post-evaluation activity and notification conferences; (6) annual evaluation summary report; (7) the annual evaluation conference; and (8) professional development plans. (DB)

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Annual Assessment Of School SLPs By Principals /Special Education Directors

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Introduction

The annual evaluation programs for personnel in service areas are a response to the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act, which requires that all personnel employed by local units of administration, including elected and appointed school superintendents, shall have their performances evaluated annually by appropriately trained evaluators. Certified professional personnel who receive satisfactory annual evaluations may be eligible for a step increase on the state salary schedule. Certified professional personnel who have deficiencies and other needs shall have professional development plans designed to mitigate such deficiencies and other needs as may have been identified during the evaluation process. The service area annual assessment instruments include the Georgia School Counselor Evaluation Program (GSCEP), the Georgia School Social Worker Evaluation Program (GSSWEP), the Georgia Media Specialist Evaluation Program (GMSEP), the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Program (GSLPEP), and the Georgia School Psychologist Evaluation Program (GSPEP).

The service area model of annual assessment, like the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP), is an ongoing process that allows for remediation when needed and encourages growth at all stages. The goal of the GTEP is to improve instruction, and the goal of the service area annual evaluation programs is to improve support services for students in Georgia's public schools.

Because of the nature of the service areas, observation is not the only assessment method that is useful or appropriate. Observations may take place in familiar classroom settings, but they may also occur in situations that are less familiar to the evaluator. Evaluators observe speech-language therapy sessions, staffings, classroom guidance, home visits by social workers, and media center activities. Because of the confidential nature of some of the services provided, observation cannot be employed as the only method of assessment. Since all of the service area roles require that accurate records be kept, evaluators review records as a part of the annual evaluation programs. Interviews provide an opportunity for the evaluator and the service area practitioner to discuss these records and activities not easily observable. Optional surveys provide the evaluator with supplemental information about the practitioner's performance.

This combination of assessment methods--observation, review of records, interview, and optional survey--forms the basis upon which the evaluator builds a professional judgment of the practitioner's fulfillment of the designated role. Each instrument does

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not employ every method of assessment. The service area model recognizes the differing roles of service area practitioners, while building on both the similarities that exist between teachers and service area practitioners, and between the separate service areas. Although the service area instruments cannot be identical because service area roles are not identical, the instruments have been developed to be consistent with each other whenever possible.

The Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Program, the annual assessment program for speech-language pathologists (SLPs), relies on observations, as well as review of records. The observation portion of the GSLPEP is adapted from the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI) and the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program. Therefore, observations conducted by the evaluator follow the guidelines established for the GTOI. The instruments and procedures are described further in a training program for evaluators and in an orientation session for SLPs.

Philosophy and Purposes

Performance evaluation is an integral component in the process of improving the instructional program and the delivery of services. An effective evaluation program results when SLPs and evaluators are successful in using evaluations to reinforce effective practices and to improve services to students.

The purposes of the annual performance evaluation are:

1. to identify and reinforce effective SLP practices,
2. to identify areas where development can improve instructional effectiveness, and services to students,
3. to identify SLPs who do not meet the minimum standards so that appropriate action can be taken.

Procedures for GSLPEP Implementation

Evaluation Instruments

The Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Program (GSLPEP) includes two instruments: the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Instrument (GSLPEI) and the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Duties and Responsibilities Instrument (GSLPDRI).

Requirements for Training and Responsibility for Evaluation

Evaluation activities must be conducted by trained evaluators. A trained evaluator is defined as an individual who has attended all state-approved, required GTEP and GSLPEP training sessions and any required update training, and who has met state adopted evaluation proficiency requirements.

The GSLPEP utilizes two evaluators: a building level evaluator (typically the school principal) who is responsible for assessment of Tasks I, II, and III of the GSLPEI; and a

system level evaluator (typically the Director of Special Education) who is responsible for Tasks IV and V of the GSLPEI. The school system designates either the building level or the system level evaluator to assume management responsibility for the SLP's evaluation. This designated evaluator is the primary evaluator. The building level evaluator is recommended to assume this responsibility which includes reviewing and signing the Annual Evaluation Summary Report. The local unit of administration designates the evaluators for each SLP.

SLP evaluations may be conducted only by system-level and school-based administrators, system-level instructional supervisory personnel, and school-based instructional leadership staff. Local system personnel may be assigned GSLPEP evaluation responsibilities only for periods when such persons do not have regularly scheduled direct student instructional responsibilities.

Recommended Timeline For Annual Assessment

Implementation of the GSLPEP should proceed along the following recommended timeline.

June-July	Evaluator Training
August-September	GSLPEP Orientation
	GSLPEP Pre-Evaluation Conference
September-March	Assessment Methods
March-April	Annual Evaluation Conference

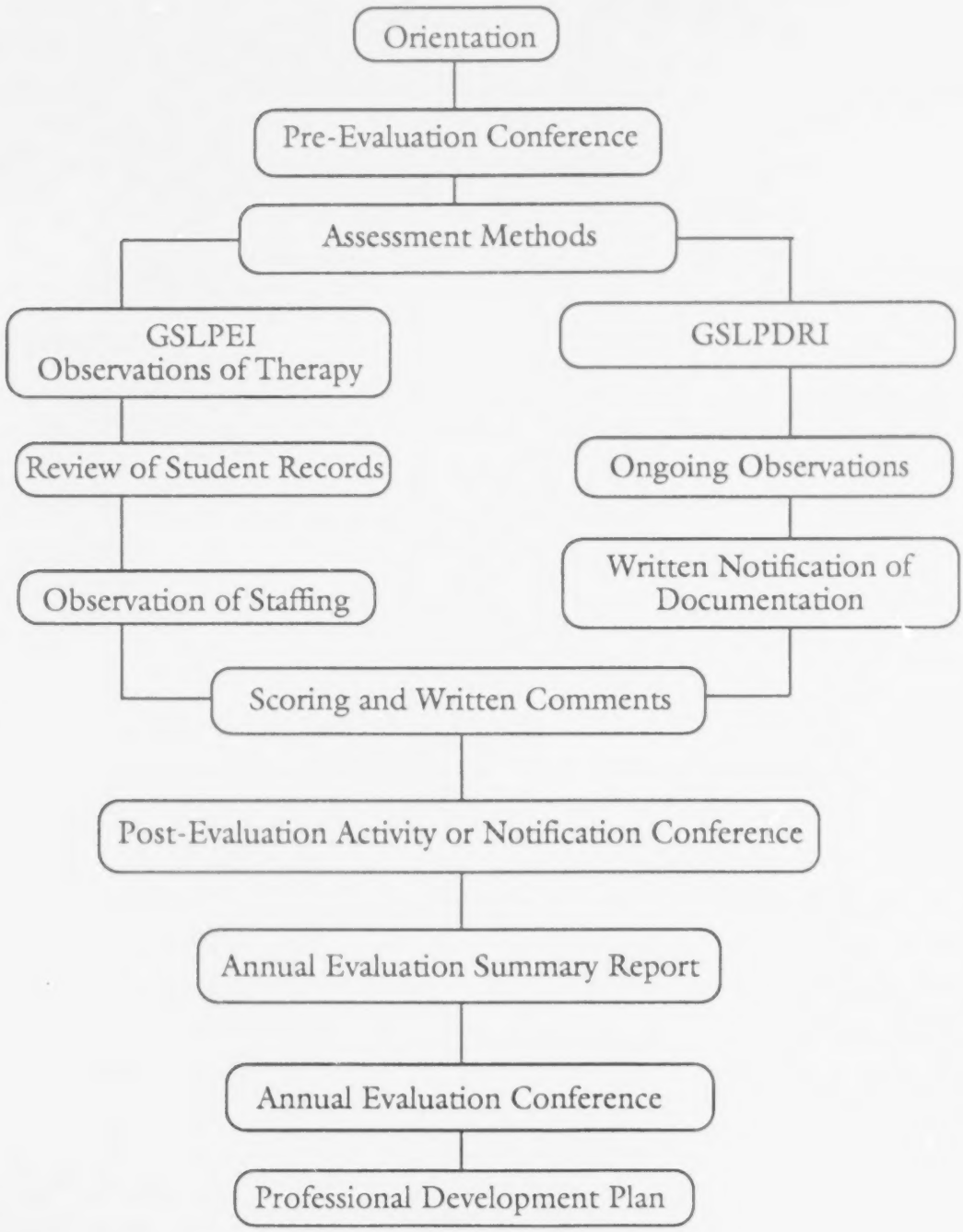
Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Process

Overview

There are several steps in the Georgia SLP evaluation process. The diagram on page 4 presents an overview of the steps.

1. *Orientation*

   All SLPs must receive an orientation prior to their initial evaluation using the current edition of the GSLPEP. The orientation is conducted by the individual SLP's evaluators or by evaluators designated by the local unit of administration. During the orientation, the evaluation process is explained, and SLPs are given an outline of assessment procedures and areas for which they provide input. The SLP should also attend the GTEP orientation session provided for teachers.


Orientation
Pre-Evaluation Conference
Assessment Methods
GSLPEI
Observations of Therapy
GSLPDRI
Review of Student Records
Ongoing Observations
Observation of Staffing
Written Notification of
Documentation
Scoring and Written Comments
Post-Evaluation Activity or Notification Conference
Annual Evaluation Summary Report
Annual Evaluation Conference
Professional Development Plan

2. *Pre-Evaluation Conference*

A pre-evaluation conference between the evaluator and the SLP is required. This conference is designed to:

a. further clarify GSLPEP content, procedures, and/or scoring criteria;

b. share background information, schedules, or other information which may have an impact on the SLP evaluation;

c. share information regarding student records and scheduled staffings.

3. *Assessment Methods*

The standard SLP evaluation in Georgia consists of observations of therapy, review of student records, observation of one staffing attended or conducted by the SLP, and ongoing observations for scoring the GSLPDRI.

a. GSLPEI

1. Tasks I, II, III

The standard procedures for the evaluation of therapy require a minimum of three unannounced observations of at least 20 minutes of therapy each. Observations for evaluation must take place during situations which provide appropriate opportunities for interaction of either a student-focused or teacher-focused nature. Evaluators should not score activities involving the assessment of the student's speech-language skills.

The extended phase is <u>required</u> in the evaluation process when an SLP has accumulated 5 or more "Needs Improvement" (NI) scores on Tasks I, II, III and has not participated in the extended phase for Tasks I, II, III during the current school year.

The extended phase evaluation of Tasks I, II, III begins with an extended phase pre-conference to plan for the extended phase. The conference is followed by an announced, diagnostic observation of at least two consecutive therapy sessions, recorded on the GSLPEI Tasks I, II, III Record: Extended Form. An extended phase post-conference to discuss the results <u>must</u> be held after the diagnostic observation. The scores from the extended observation are used for diagnostic purposes only and <u>must not</u> be used to determine the annual evaluation classification.

If all the scores from the initial extended observation are satisfactory, standard observations are resumed. If the scores indicate improvement is needed, assistance should be planned and provided promptly. If necessary, the plan for assistance should be formulated as a Professional Development Plan and implemented immediately. After a reasonable amount of time, standard observations <u>must</u> resume until a total of four standard visits are accumulated. The extended phase may continue during the time that

standard observations have been resumed. For SLPs who have entered the extended phase, the annual evaluation results will be based on the best 3 of 4 standard observations.

2. Tasks IV, V

The standard procedures for the evaluation of the SLP's speech-language assessment skills require the review of a minimum of three records of students evaluated and placed in the speech-language therapy program by the SLP, a review of at least one record of a student dismissed from the program by the SLP, and one **announced** observation of the SLP while attending or conducting a staffing.

The extended phase is required in the evaluation process when an SLP has accumulated 1 or more "Needs Improvement" (NI) scores on Tasks IV and V and when the SLP has not participated in the extended phase for Tasks IV and V during the current school year. This phase begins with an extended phase pre-conference with the evaluator to discuss mistakes made in the records and/or during the staffing. The SLP is required to correct mistakes made in the records. The evaluator rechecks these records and scores one additional set of three student records. If the first staffing observed is not satisfactory, the evaluator and SLP plan remediation before an additional staffing is observed. For SLPs who have entered the extended phase, the annual evaluation results are based on the scores received on the second one of the two sets of records reviewed and/or the second observation of the staffing.

b. GSLPDRI

Items in the GSLPDRI are scored by exception. Evaluation of the performance of the duties and responsibilities of the SLP is based on observations of the SLP throughout the school year. Unsatisfactory performance in any area must be brought to the immediate attention of the SLP. Corrective actions should be taken, and appropriate documentation should be prepared and filed at that time.

The primary evaluator is responsible for review of the GSLPDRI during the Annual Evaluation Conference.

4. *Scoring and Written Comments*

Therapy observations, review of records, and observations of staffing are scored for each dimension for Tasks I, II, III and Subdimensions for Tasks IV and V, and comments must be written for each task within the GSLPEI on the corresponding record form. These comments should address the program purposes of identifying and reinforcing effective practices and identifying areas where development can improve instructional effectiveness.

Scoring is on the basis of satisfactory (S) or needs improvement (NI) with the following exceptions. Building for Transfer (Task I, Dimension C) may be scored

not applicable (NA) during student-focused content development. Content Development (Task I, Dimension B) may be scored by observing either teacher-focused interactions or student-focused interactions or both.

The evaluator scores the GSLPEI and prepares written comments. The SLP must receive a written copy of the evaluation results within five working days. The SLP may attach written comments to the results and may request a conference to discuss scores and written comments.

Items in the GSLPDRI are scored by exception. All areas are considered satisfactory unless the SLP has received notification and written documentation noting unsatisfactory performance and an initial conference on any new deficient area prior to the annual evaluation summary.

5. *Post-Evaluation Activity and Notification Conferences*

Conferences to discuss each evaluation activity may be initiated by either the SLP or the evaluator. Formal and informal conferences to discuss instruction are encouraged. Post-evaluation conferences are required in the extended evaluation phase. A notification conference is required any time an SLP receives the first notification of any deficient area in the GSLPDRI. The purpose of the notification conference is to explain the deficient area, the subject of concern, the actions required, and the time frame for corrections.

6. *Annual Evaluation Summary Report*

The Annual Evaluation Summary Report provides an evaluation summary as well as summary information on areas of strength, areas for improvement, and areas for professional development.

7. *Annual Evaluation Conference*

An Annual Evaluation Conference must be conducted with each SLP, at which time a summary of the results on the GSLPEI and GSLPDRI is presented. The SLP is provided with a record of this summary and may respond in writing to the results. If written comments are submitted by the SLP, they must be attached to the Annual Evaluation Summary Report.

The Annual Evaluation Conference provides the opportunity for three activities:

a. to communicate the overall evaluation results for the school year;

b. to review specific areas of strength and areas identified for improvement; and

c. for the SLP and the primary evaluator, the evaluator assuming management responsibility for the SLP's evaluation, to sign, date and receive copies of the Annual Evaluation Summary Report. A signature line is provided for the principal who is not the primary evaluator but who wishes to review the Annual Evaluation Summary Report or who is required by local system policy to do so.

This conference may also be used to discuss the content of the Professional Development Plan.

8. *Professional Development Plans*

Professional Development Plans (PDPs) are encouraged for all SLPs. The PDP is part of continuing staff development for the benefit of the individual SLP. SLPs whose overall summary evaluation results are in the "Unsatisfactory" category or who demonstrate other needs according to criteria established during the annual evaluation process and who are offered a subsequent contract must have a plan. The plan is optional for others.

Measurement of progress on a required PDP is required as part of the next year's annual evaluation. The plan includes (a) specific objectives for improvement, (b) activities and a timeline for meeting these objectives, (c) criteria for measurement of progress on the objectives, (d) a record of participation in recommended activities, (e) a record of performance on specified criteria, and (f) signature blanks for the SLP and the evaluator.

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